

NATIONAL CAPITAL AFFAIRS

An Old Man Wearing Army Button Shines Shoes

WASHINGTON.—Have you seen him? And did you have to swallow a lump? Maybe you have missed him, so far, for he doesn't stay put. His business requires circulation. And, besides, you can't stay still in November when you have no overcoat. You've just naturally got to keep going.

Yesterday he was down by the soldiers' monument—an army button on his coat and a shoe brush in his hand—waiting and waiting—until Providence came by in the shape of a man with one of those loud, cheery voices that God gives to many men, but which only Dickens could describe.

"Why, bless my soul! Where did you get that old kit? Give me a shine."

He put a foot on the small shoe-shine box. Remember when the kiddies used to shine 'em up on the streets? Gee, it's a long time back! And the other man creaked his joints into a crouch and proceeded to put on a polish.

To a woman who had happened along it did not seem probable that a customer wearing as good clothes as a tailor can make would really enjoy having his shoes smeared over with blacking that you can bet your life wasn't Day & Martin's, or that he wanted them scratched up with a cheap brush by a wavering hand. Still, you can't always rely on the sex supposings of a spinster soul whose only knowledge of man has been of the mail—note the spelling, please—mail correspondence variety. Anyhow, whatever his reason, the man put one foot and then the other on the box and told the other man about how he used to be a bootblack—before the shoe-shine kiddies vanished with the coming of the asphalt. And did it pay? And wouldn't it be better to get something more profitable and sheltered from the weather—a watchman's place, for instance? Any man who had fought for a flag ought to be fit to guard a store.

The woman had to leave them there, so that she can never know how the job turned out, but—

If you don't come across an old man with a gone-by shoe box on his back, waiting around for a chance to shine 'em up, you may know that he's got a job as a watchman.

Congressman Finds His Boyhood's Wish Fulfilled

REPRESENTATIVE CLAUDE WEAVER of Oklahoma finds in his coming to congress the fulfillment of a wish expressed ever since he was nine years old. At the age he began his diary with the statement that he was hours on his hands, decided to go out in the suburbs and rehearse his oration. He selected a secluded spot on the road along which ran a long, high brick wall, with a gate at the end. Weaver did not know it, but this was the state lunatic asylum.

Up and down the road he paced, talking most vehemently, gesticulating wildly to an imaginary determined to be one of the nation's representatives. And ever since then he has worked with this object in view.

Weaver settled in Oklahoma when there were few white people living there. But in one of his trips in Texas, to deliver a political speech, he had an adventure which seemed at the time much more serious than it does now. He reached the town to which he was headed, and as he had a few audience, shaking his head and pounding one hand upon the other. People who passed shook their heads sadly.

Presently, as he neared the great iron gate, four uniformed men rushed out, grabbed him by the arms and legs and carried him, kicking and fighting, inside the grounds. Weaver, choking with rage, demanded an explanation of such an outrage.

"Aw, gwan!" chortled one of the brawny guards, setting Weaver on his feet with a jerk. "What you handing us—we know you is one of them bugs outen ward C."

"Lunatic!" yelled Weaver, who now saw into what spot he had landed. "Lunatic? Why, I am a politician and expect to go to congress!"

"Well," drawled the guard, with a grin, "I don't know but what you've got to just the same kind of place now!"

Senator Went to Capitol Only Half Dressed

THEY are telling this story on John R. Thornton, senator from Louisiana: Thornton arose absent-mindedly, dressed himself fully, he thought, and went into the dining room of his hotel for breakfast. The head waiter grinned at him a bit, but the senator, who was in a hurry, failed to notice it.

He just caught a street car bound for the capitol and plumped himself between Postmaster General Burleson and Edward Keating, representative from Colorado.

"See, you're dressed for hot weather," commented the postmaster.

Senator Thornton, attired in white linen, nodded his head complacently.

"Yes," he said; "we of the south learn to do that."

And he wondered why his hearers smiled in an embarrassed manner.

When he reached the senate office building the elevator man said:

"Good morning, senator. I see you're prepared for the heat."

This rather puzzled Senator Thornton, for he always wears linen in summer. The explanation of it all came when his son Gordon, who is also his secretary, saw him.

"Say, father," he yelled as Senator Thornton entered his office. "What on earth did you do with your collar?"

Thornton grabbed at his neck wildly. He had on neither collar nor tie. He hustled his son back on the hotel for the necessary articles of raiment and then sat down and wrote apologies to both the postmaster and Mr. Keating, telling them that he hadn't intentionally gone downtown in the street car with them half dressed; it was only an oversight.

"I intend to talk to that waiter in the hotel," he moaned, sadly. "Why didn't he tell me I was only half dressed?"

Representative Slump Finds an Agent of Cupid

REPRESENTATIVE BASCOM SLEMP of Virginia was until recently a bachelor. A few years ago, however, when he was "heart whole and fancy free," he was speaking to a large assembly at a political gathering. The audience was full of handsome women and pretty girls who were, of course, much interested in the tariff when it is explained by a young bachelor who lived in official Washington.

Slemp got along famously, carrying with him the sympathy of the crowd. But at last a fellow in a back seat rose to make a statement.

"I like Slemp," he roared. "Slemp's all right. The only thing I have agin him is that he is not married. Now, I propose to this honorable gathering that we refuse to vote for him unless he promises to get married."

Slemp was equal to the occasion.

"I acknowledge my desolate state," he exclaimed, "yet it is not my fault, but that of the fair ones who will not have me. If there is any one among the many lovely ladies in this audience who will accept my heart and hand, I am only too willing to be led to the altar."

The man jumped to his feet again excitedly.

"No, you don't," he exclaimed. "You'll have to go to foreign parts to get your bride—all the girls around here have got too much sense to take you!"

Belting Rapidly Disappearing.

The rapid displacement of the belt as a means of transmitting power is not only resulting in a great saving of energy in the work shops of the world, but also is a great saving of life, for the use of the belt has always been attended by injury and loss of life to a serious degree. The electric drive is remedying all this. Although the United States was the pioneer in the development of motor driven machinery, it appears that Germany is at present leading in the extent of its use, for anything but an electrically driven machine is rarely seen in that country.

This Cockatoo Crops Wood.

John Rubo, of Kingscliffe, Northants, has an eighteen-year-old silver crested Australian cockatoo which not only talks and "sings" but has a mania for "chopping" wood. Each day the housekeeper provides her helper with a starch or soap box and the bird breaks it up with its beak into short and thin pieces suitable for firewood, any nails in the way being drawn.

"The amount of labor that bird has saved in the way of wood chopping is enormous," the housekeeper says. "The only thing I have to do is to see that there is no paint on the boxes."

—New York Sun.



ROBERT P. BARRICK,
President Chicago Steam Railroad Employees' Safety Association.

Electrification of railroads is a menace to the safety of the employees and of the public as well. The U. S. Interstate Commerce Commission, December 19, 1913, issued a report which showed the tremendous number of accidents which occurred last year, where electrification is in operation. The report shows that electric rules are easily misunderstood.

"All of the mistakes noted above are violations of simple rules, which should have been easily understood by men of sufficient intelligence to be entrusted with the operation of trains. The evidence is that in the main the rules are understood, but they are habitually violated by employees who are charged with responsibility for the safe movement of trains. The evidence is that in many cases operating officers are cognizant of this habitual disregard of rules and no proper steps are taken to correct the evil."

In rendering this opinion the Interstate Commerce Commission has thrown upon railroad employees the stigma of being derelict in the performance of their duties, and severely criticized managers because of their apparent lack of discipline; but not a word is said about the law-making bodies—municipal, state and national—forcing railroad discipline into a slough of despond through vying with each other in endeavor to operate railroads through politics instead of by management acquired in the hard school of practical experience. To make this clear, attention is called to some events in the order herein recorded.

New York state legislated the abandonment of coal-burning locomotives in the Park Avenue tunnel—By Law.

This was a subterfuge on the part of state officials to force railroads to electrify—By Law.

When the highly dangerous character of electrical operation was discovered, New York lawmakers (the Public Service Commission) compelled the railroad companies to place rules in their timetables which employees could not obey—By Law.

Railroad employees were prohibited from performing certain duties necessary to the safety of travelers in electric zones—By Law.

To preserve human life, railroad companies, in defiance of the law, promulgated rules for employees, compelling them to violate the law in electric zones, and in so doing, save the

lives of travelers by violating—the Law.

Employees on railroads partly operated by electric power are sacrificing life and limb to protect travelers by violating the rules—and Law.

This preservation of human life, in defiance of law and rules, deprive employees, in case of injury, and their families, in case of death, of the right to recover damages, because they violate—the Law.

In Chicago, buildings on the Illinois Central right of way are restricted to a certain height dangerous to employees—By Law.

Citizens clubs of Chicago and other interests are now endeavoring to force railroads to cover their tracks, and as in New York state, designate the power to be used—By Law.

It was positively proven that a woman sitting in her room was blinded for several days by electric flash from a high-tension wire. A flash of this kind would result in great danger to travelers if trainmen were blinded at a critical time. Will the federal authorities claiming the right to pass on the "physical construction and operation of railroads engaged in interstate traffic" permit a city or town to be beautified by forcing railroads to cover their tracks, thereby compelling them to use electric power, and in the covered area create a channel house for travelers and employees—By Law?

James T. Patterson, business agent of bottle beer and liquor wagon drivers' and helpers' union, has issued a stirring appeal for help for the striking miners of Northern Michigan. He tells members of his union that their share in this work will be to solicit from friends and the public generally, such articles of clothing as they will donate. Hats, caps, gloves, coats, vests, trousers, stockings, shoes, boots, wrappers, dresses or children's clothing and bed covering, used or new, (no package too small or too large). Have each contributor sign one of the addressed postals and mail at once, and we will attend to the delivery.

Ambrose A. Worsley would make an ideal municipal judge.

City building inspectors are entitled to more pay.

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MUNICIPAL NEWS

Some Items of Interest From the Public Offices About Occurrences of the Week.

The City Council on Monday night transacted the following business:

Fight started to prevent all dumping of refuse in Lake Michigan.

Action urged for better protection of grade crossings.

Ordinance presented to concentrate purchasing powers of city.

Special investment of traction fund to be planned.

Action on Clearing freight yard ordinance deferred.

Subways are what Chicago people demand. But will they get them? Mayor Harrison's comprehensive city-wide rapid transit subway ordinance was passed up by financial and engineering concerns when the time for receiving proposals expired at noon Monday.

Instead of a bid an offer was made by Charles S. Thornton, who was corporation counsel during Mayor Harrison's first term, in behalf of London and New York engineering concerns to build a subway if terms—one item being that the city donate its \$12,000,000 traction fund—could be agreed on with the city.

The local transportation committee decided to report to the council tonight that no bids had been received and take up Attorney Thornton's proposal when his principals arrive later this week.

With the collapse of the present comprehensive subway proposition and its certain postponement into the future, traction experts say that Chicago has again reached a traction crisis equal to that confronted by the city before the settlement ordinances of 1907 were passed. Mr. Thornton's proposal, they say, will keep the proposition alive for political purposes.

The aldermen did not feel sure of anything definite coming of it. Mr. Thornton, however, declared it is practically an offer of a subway free to Chicago. He insisted that terms must be vastly different, however, than those the city now proposes.

The Walston H. Brown Construction company, 45 Wall street, New York, and Griffiths & Co., Limited, London, England, are back of Mr. Thornton's proposal. The attorney said J. Norton Griffiths is now crossing the ocean and with Mr. Brown will come to Chicago this week. Foreign capital, he said, is behind the project.

American capital not being available. In the formal offer Mr. Thornton said the company would put \$50,000,000 in a first unit of thirty miles and later \$50,000,000 more in a second unit of the same extent.

"Will your company bid under these specifications?" asked Ald. Capitain.

"No, sir," replied Attorney Thornton. "The suggestions of the tentative ordinance are absolutely impossible. We ask that after the company has put in \$15,000,000 or \$20,000,000 the city put in part of its traction fund and all of it later."

"Will you be ready in five years?" continued the alderman.

"I think so, but three years is out of the question, and as for a forfeit of \$10,000 a day, \$3,000,000 a year, it is not to be thought of," replied the attorney. "We are willing to put up the money if the Chicago people want it, and on fair terms. All we want in our foreign capital is the return of the principal and interest. We can start work in May or June."

"Would the limit of twenty years make it hard to finance?" asked Ald. Mayer.

"I can prepare an ordinance under those limits satisfactory to the company," replied Mr. Thornton.

Later Attorney Thornton explained that he had in mind an ordinance which would get around the twenty year limitation without need of legislative action in 1915, and that he was only awaiting the arrival of Mr. Griffiths to make public full details of the proposal. He also said the new state Utilities Commission would accept any ordinance approved at the spring election.

Representative David J. Lewis of Maryland, who is known as "the father of the parcel post," is the staunchest advocate in Congress of government ownership of the telephone systems of the United States. He has devoted much time to an elaborate study of the telephone and telegraph situations, and regardless of the recent voluntary dissolution declares that government ownership should embrace this field at once. He is unhesitating in the prophecy that government ownership of these utilities would prove as successful, and as highly beneficial to the public, as the parcel post.



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